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AUTHOR Knight, J. Pat; Litcher, John H.
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ABSTRACT

The consortium-based teacher education program concept was formulated to provide a more effective means of linking continuing education activity to research and development in education. The program's primary objectives include the development and maintenance of a systematic certification training program for prospective teachers, development and implementation of advanced certification programs not readily available through local institutions of higher education (IHE's), provision of appropriate staff development activities, the support of research projects in education, and the provision of a vehicle of interaction between the associated parties. This article explores the various standards and guidelines identified as essential for the development and implementation of a consortium-based teacher education/certification program. The partnership relations that must exist between the involved parties (IHE's, local education agencies, professional organizations, and the state department of public instruction) are identified and discussed. Additionally, the strategies utilized during the developmental, implementation, and evaluation stages of example programs in Charlotte (Metrolina Education Consortium) and Winston-Salem, (Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Consortium for Personnel Development) North Carolina, are outlined and critiqued. (Authors/JD)

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Teacher Certification

in

Consortium-based Teacher Education Programs

J. Pat Knight
Appalachian State University
Boone, North Carolina

John H. Litcher
Wake Forest University
Winston-Salem, North Carolina

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Teacher Certification
in
Consortium Based Teacher Education Programs

Abstract

Dr. John H. Litcher
Director of Teacher Education
Wake Forest University

Dr. J. Pat Knight
Director of Laboratory Experiences
Appalachian State University

The Consortium Based Teacher Education Program concept was formulated to provide a more effective means of linking continuing education activity to research and development in education. The Program's primary objectives include the development and maintenance of a systematic certification training program for prospective teachers, the development and implementation of advanced certification programs not readily available through local IHE's, provision of appropriate staff development activities, the support of research projects in education, and the providing of a vehicle of interaction between the associated parties.

The article explores the various standards and guidelines identified as essential for the development and implementation of a Consortium Based Teacher Education/Certification Program. The partnership relations that must exist between the involved parties (IHE, LEA, Professional Organizations, and SDPI) are identified and discussed. Additionally, the strategies utilized during the developmental, implementation, and evaluation stages of example programs in Charlotte and Winston-Salem, North Carolina, are outlined and critiqued.

NORTH CAROLINA CONSORTIUM-BASED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Two consortium based teacher education programs exist within the North Carolina educational structure. The first consortium discussed here is the Metrolina Education Consortium which operates within the educational framework of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg School System in Charlotte, North Carolina. The second consortium identified is the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Consortium for Personnel Development located in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Teacher certification programs developed within the consortiums are basically different from the teacher education programs typically identified with institutions of higher education. The standards and guidelines traditionally applied to the campus-based teacher education programs that stress course completion are not applicable to consortium-based programs. The only common bond that exists between the consortium-based programs and the campus-based programs are the certification competencies required of all individuals completing either educational program.

In its teacher education program guidelines, the state of North Carolina identified those competencies to be achieved by persons completing any program that leads to the awarding of teacher certification. Because the approaches utilized within the consortium-based programs to obtain those competencies are quite different from those of the course-oriented approach usually identified with campus-based programs, the consortium-based programs place strict emphasis on standards and guidelines in a way that is quite different from traditional teacher education approaches. For example: 1) the Consortium provides a vehicle allowing a number or educational agencies to combine resources and efforts to design and develop the various teacher certification programs; 2) the Consortium dictates the appropriate learning experiences regardless of their origin or time

frame: 3) the Consortium recognizes demonstrated performance as the primary criterion for awarding certification; 4) the Consortium encourages creative modes of developing and implementing certification program changes; 5) the Consortium awards certification to those persons who have achieved teaching competencies through experiences different from those usually prescribed in a college-based program; and 6) the Consortium generally decentralizes the responsibility for teacher preparation programs.

Basically, the two Consortiums developed teacher certification programs according to the North Carolina Guidelines and Standards. The programs were then submitted to the appropriate state agencies for approval. Both Consortiums have been approved and both are presently recommending persons for certification who have successfully completed the programs.

The following paragraphs indicate in a general way the approaches used by the two North Carolina Consortiums. The general goals of the two organizations are very similar, but the approaches used by the two Consortiums are radically different.

The Metrolina Education Consortium is an organization developed to facilitate joint planning among the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Schools, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. Basically, that planning is aimed toward the development and implementation of continuing education programs for candidates in the Charlotte area and the identification, development, and implementation of related research programs designed to improve instruction.

The Consortium is governed by a policy board consisting of four teachers from the public schools, four public school administrators, one faculty member from each aligned university, and two persons from the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. An Executive Director is named to coordinate the efforts of the policy board and to act in its behalf. The final authority for all actions of the Consortium resides with the policy board.

The Consortium, through its policy board, is empowered to participate in the development and implementation of programs leading to the sixth-year certificate. These programs are usually offered through one of the participating universities. However, if the affiliated universities do not have approved programs of study leading to the desired certificate or if the unique nature of the desired program is such that a number of agencies must be involved, the Consortium will utilize its power and grant the certificate.

The Consortium does not offer degrees, and aligned universities retain control over their own Master's degree programs. Sufficient input, however, is assured to Consortium participants who wish to be involved directly in the planning of degree programs in the participating universities.

The Consortium is typically more concerned with the professional than with the academic components of the degree. Though the Consortium will cooperate with liberal arts departments to assure the offering of academic courses appropriate to the educational needs of those involved, the key emphasis is placed upon tailoring professional courses to the perceived needs of the participants. The awarding of the "G" certificate (for the Master's degree) will follow the acquisition of the Master's degree. The sixth-year certificate is strictly a professional license and, unlike the "G" certificate, is not related to a degree.

A key component of the Consortium and one of its primary features is its ability to identify the wishes of individual professional educators for advanced graduate study and to combine those wishes with the program development needs of the area public schools.

Another purpose of the Metrolina Education Consortium rests in its ability to entice teachers and administrators to become actively involved in professional research projects. The Consortium gives preference to projects whose potential results are directly applicable to teaching practices in area schools. The Consortium, however, will not sponsor reasearch projects that will allow

individual children to be either singled out or identified. Furthermore, the Consortium prefers research projects that are directly applicable to the identified and stated goals of the Charlotte/Mecklenburg Public Schools.

In summary, the Metrolina Education Consortium is designed primarily to develop and implement an extensive offering of continuing education programs for professional educators. Additionally, the Consortium addresses the need for the development and implementation of educational research projects that are supportive of the local school systems and that are responsive to the needs of the practitioners.

In its most comprehensive tone, the Consortium may be identified as an organization designed to facilitate interaction and planning among agencies declaring an interest in the training of professional educators and in conducting educational research and developmental activities. Developing a closer bond between educational theory and practice and encouraging active dialogue between educational practitioners and action researchers are stated as the key motivating goals leading to the development of the Metrolina Education Consortium.

The Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Consortium for Personnel Development is a formal partnership of Salem College, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem State University, the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the professional staff of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The purpose of the Consortium is to develop, implement, and evaluate teacher education and training programs for in-service teachers seeking certification in additional areas.

The Consortium is governed by a policy board composed of representatives of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the professional staff of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the institutions of higher education (Salem College, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem State University) and the State Department of Public Instruction. The policy board directs the four groups in the Consortium to equality of power to influence decisions and assume

responsibility for implementing decisions. Equality is achieved by the assignment of one vote to each group represented on the policy board and by a clear delineation of the responsibilities of each group. The final authority for all actions of the Consortium resides with the policy board.

The roles of the four groups in the Consortium were determined during the formation of the Consortium. The responsibilities require cooperative team coordination and include: 1) identification of certification area programs; 2) implementation and evaluation of programs; 3) prescription of courses, workshops, independent studies, and field experiences for the teacher-clients in the program; 4) evaluation of the progress and achievement of each teacher-client; and 5) recommendation for certification of teacher-clients who have successfully completed a given program.

The programs of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Consortium for Personnel Development are available to all full-time, certified teachers in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School System. Prospective teacher-clients can obtain additional certification in eight areas: Math, Science, Early Childhood (K-3), Intermediate (4-9), Gifted and Talented, Learning Disabled, Educable Mentally Handicapped (EMG), and Emotionally Handicapped (EH).

The size and operation of the eight certification programs is controlled by the policy board through policies and procedures that include: 1) advertising programs; 2) determining number and composition of certification area teams based on the number and goals of the teacher-clients; 3) determining each teacher-client's entry and exit criteria; 4) prescribing programs for each teacher-client; 5) identifying resources necessary for program implementation; and 6) integrating counseling services to each teacher-client's program. The roles and responsibilities of the four groups comprising the consortium to the operational tasks are coordinated by the policy board.

The Standards and Guidelines for Approval of Institutions and Programs for

Teacher Education in North Carolina are used to indicate acceptable entry into the program. The same guidelines specify levels of competence expected throughout the preparation process for the teacher-clients. Standards regarding knowledges, skills, and attitudes are defined and administered in each certification area.

When appropriate, the Consortium is responsible for redirecting or altering a teacher-client's program to conform to the standards. Likewise, the Consortium is responsible for implementing procedures which determine the effectiveness of its programs. The effectiveness of each program is judged on the basis of what the teacher-client is expected to know and perform rather than on the completion of courses, workshops, or independent studies.

The Consortium is also responsible for identifying the human and material resources available and needed to implement the eight certification area programs. Coordination of the four groups in the Consortium is designed to make the certification area teams viable. Coordination responsibility is assumed by the Director of Support Services of the school system; the heads of the Departments of Education of the three institutions of higher education; the school system's Teacher Advisory Council; representatives of the Division of Standards and Certification of the State Department of Public Instruction; and representatives of the Forsyth County American Federation of Teachers and the Forsyth Association of Classroom Teachers. The sources of available and qualified personnel to serve as consultants and instructors to the teacher-clients include professors and instructors of the institutions of higher education, school system specialists and master teachers, private consultants in the region, and State Department specialists in the region.

The material resources of the Consortium include the buildings, classrooms, library-media centers, and audiovisual equipment of the institutions of higher education and Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. Funding for the programs comes from the school syste, the state, and clients' application fees. School

system and college participation on program area teams was assured by the institutions during the formation of the Consortium. Team members are compensated for participation by the Policy Board, and the professional teachers' participation is assured on the basis of agreed-upon compensation.

The certification area programs are planned and implemented according to the needs of the teacher-clients on an individual basis. All teacher-clients are expected to be proficient in their existing areas of certification, to possess appropriate entry competence levels for the program area, and to exhibit a continuous competence growth throughout their program.

The Consortium has established exit levels of competence that meet the State adopted Standards and Guidelines for Approval of Institutions and Programs for Teacher Education. Each teacher-client exits the program following evaluation by the team members in the certification area and the policy board.

The Metrolina Education Consortium and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Consortium for Personnel Development are two teacher education programs that lead to advanced or additional teacher certification. Both programs represent unique approaches to teacher certification and both utilize teaching/learning methods and strategies that are different from campus-based programs. The implications of the consortium approach to the future of teacher education are numberous and only partially realized. However, the cooperative efforts of in-service teachers, school system personnel, and institutions of higher education in the consortium approach appear to be an essential and a positive step for teacher education programs that lead to advanced or additional teacher certification.